

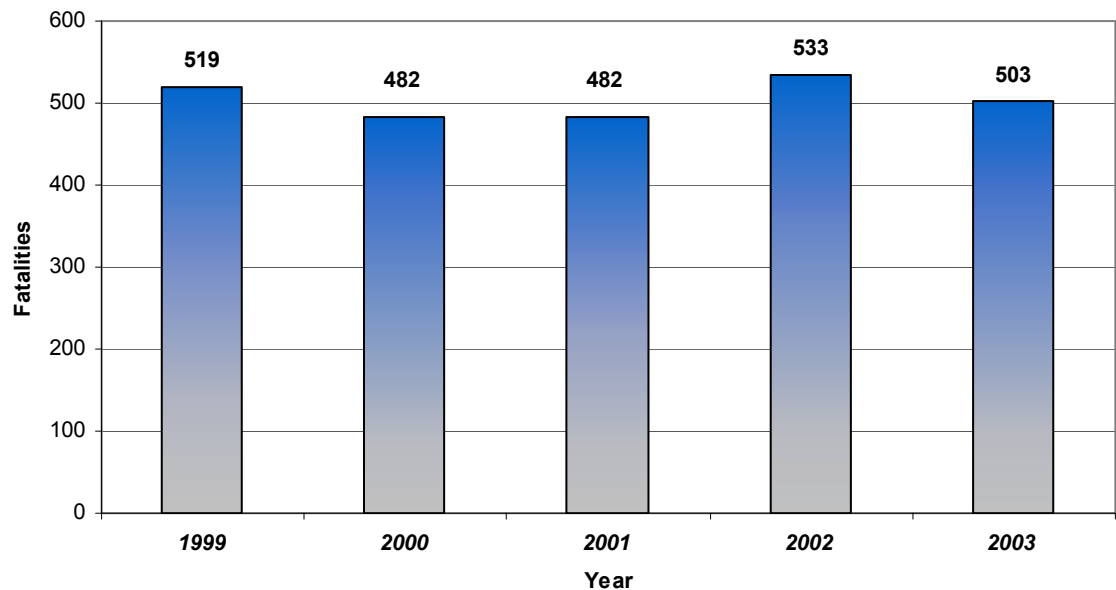
Alcohol and Other Impaired Driving

Background

In 2003, 44 percent of all Illinois' fatalities from traffic crashes were alcohol-related according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Of these crashes, 34.6 percent of all fatally injured drivers tested positive for Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) (result greater than or equal to .01). Of the fatally injured drivers ages 16-24 tested for alcohol, more than 50 percent returned positive BAC results. Underage male drivers, young male drivers, and weekend crashes were prominent components of alcohol/drug related crashes. Drivers under the age of 21 accounted for 14.2 percent of all driver fatalities, and 32.5 percent of these fatalities were alcohol-related. It has been shown that the fear of arrest, subsequent license loss, prosecution, and conviction are the best deterrents to impaired driving. This is especially true for the 18-34 age group. In conjunction with alcohol impairment, speed and safety belt usage are often contributing factors in these fatalities.

Figure 5. Illinois Known Alcohol-Related Fatalities

(Fatalities resulting from crashes where at least one driver, either surviving or killed, had a positive BAC of .01 or greater.)



Source: IDOT Division of Traffic Safety

Figure 5 displays the quantity of traffic fatalities known to be alcohol-related. This data is incomplete, since a large number of killed drivers and passengers are not tested for alcohol. In 2003, Illinois' BAC testing rate of all drivers involved in fatal crashes was 50.7 percent. This rate greatly exceeds the national average of 40 percent in 2003.

Recent Implemented Strategies

- Created a Governor's Alcohol Abuse Task Force to heighten public awareness and rejuvenate determination to reduce impaired driving.
- Executed year-round drunk driving enforcement.
- Provided special enforcement emphasis during national crackdown periods.
- Employed strong public information and education campaigns, such as "You Drink, You Drive, You Lose."
- Increased training for law enforcement officers and the criminal justice community.
- Increased participation and coordination by all components of the DUI system: enforcement, prosecution, adjudication, and rehabilitation.
- Increased statewide law enforcement agency participation in counties where 85 percent of the population is located.
- Implemented Illinois Impaired Driving Assessment recommendations.
- Continued implementation of IDOT's Highway Safety Plan initiatives:
 - Added hireback patrol hours of Secretary of State's Police through the Anti-Drunk Driving Enforcement Program
 - Funded Operation Straight I.D., Project 21, and the Social Norming (SONOR) Program
 - Provided local DUI law enforcement liaisons
 - Continued training for DUI law enforcement officers
 - Funded roadside safety checkpoints
 - Offered judicial training for judges
 - Funded Local Alcohol Projects and Mini-Alcohol Projects
 - Funded Alcohol Countermeasure Enforcement (ACE) projects directed at youths
 - Developed DUI and ".08" public awareness programs
 - Identified and analyzed alcohol-related crash fatalities by jurisdiction in targeted counties
 - Targeted enforcement at select high-crash locations
 - Funded "Don't Turn Your Summer into a Bummer"
 - Funded the Illinois Liquor Control Commission
 - Funded a racial profiling study
 - Purchased breath-testing instruments for local law enforcement officer training
 - Funded Beverage Alcohol Sellers and Servers Education and Training (BASSET)

Challenges

- Speeding as a frequent contributing factor in alcohol-related crashes.
- Lack of safety belt usage tied to impaired driving.
- Increase in underage and young adult drinking and driving.
- Society's acceptance of "drink and drive."
- Limited public awareness of the problem.
- High cost for airing public service announcements during primetime media.
- Inability to track DUI instances and link all DUI databases.

- Repeat offenders who continue to drive.
- Limited resources for offender rehabilitation programs.
- Complicated existing legislation that is difficult to enforce and adjudicate.
- Prosecution and judiciary coordination.
- Judicial system that typically gives court supervision for first DUI offense.
- Limited resources for enforcement, prosecution, and judiciary.
- Inconsistent BAC testing for fatally injured drivers, passengers, and pedestrians.
- Updating crash reports with BAC test results.

Proposed Strategies

- Implement driver awareness programs on the dangers of impaired, fatigued, and distracted driving.
- Focus more resources on high-visibility enforcement.
- Provide selective enforcement directed at speeding and impaired driving.
- Support cross-jurisdictional agreements among law enforcement agencies.
- Promote stricter enforcement of laws prohibiting underage drinking, serving, and purchasing of alcohol.
- Continue to conduct strong public information and education campaigns.
- Provide media campaign literature at public information meetings for proposed construction projects.
- Continue a Governor's Alcohol Abuse Task Force to heighten public awareness and rejuvenate determination to reduce impaired driving and implement recommendations.
- Develop and implement initiatives to reduce underage alcohol use and drunk driving.
- Review recommendations from the National Academy of Sciences "Report on Underage Drinking" for possible implementation.
- Consider development of an Illinois Fatal Alcohol Crash Team (F.A.C.T.).
- Promote mandatory field sobriety testing.
- Require mandatory skills testing of officers involved in DUI enforcement.
- Increase BAC testing of killed drivers, passengers, and pedestrians.
- Promote the need for mandatory blood draw requirement compliance to the health care industry.
- Train paramedics to draw blood on scene and testify in court.
- Support Illinois State Police (ISP) research of instruments that can detect impaired drivers by scanning their eyes.
- Develop a DUI tracking system that links several DUI databases available at various state agencies.
- Develop and implement rehabilitation programs for repeat offenders.
- Improve coordination and communication of DUI enforcement, prosecution, and adjudication, such as increase usage of DUI/drug courts to reduce recidivism.
- Designate specific DUI courts with judges that only adjudicate DUIs.
- Promote accountability among the judicial system for DUI convictions.

- Engineer vehicles to prohibit impaired drivers from operating them.
- Investigate engineering solutions to mitigate the occurrence and severity of alcohol-related crashes such as:
 - Enhanced and/or innovative traffic control devices (signs, signals and markings)
 - Traffic barriers (guardrail, median barriers, bridge railing and crash cushions)
 - Improved roadway geometrics and channelization
- Continue implementing and developing IDOT's Highway Safety Plan initiatives.
- Investigate all recent implemented strategies for success.